

Immunization Registry Progress in Washington

Immunization Coverage in Washington:

According to National Immunization Survey (NIS) data for July 98 through June 99, the percentage of children 19-35 months of age who were up-to-date with 4 doses of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, 3 doses of poliomyelitis, and 1 dose of measles, mumps, rubella vaccine was 78%.

Facts about CHILD Profile:

CHILD Profile is unique in that it consists of both health promotion and immunization tracking. It provides parents with regular educational information to help them make decisions about their child's health care, and it gives health care providers access to a shared registry of immunization information to facilitate care of each child.

Additionally, CHILD Profile is a collaborative effort between public and private health in Washington State. Broad-based support is needed in order to establish this system statewide and sustain it.

Some registry plans, accomplishments, and successes:

The health promotion component of CHILD Profile expanded statewide on July 1, 1998, and currently sends health information to families of over 300,000 children from birth to age six. In February 1999, Washington implemented the Hallmark card and is sending it to all parents of newborn children via the CHILD Profile health promotion materials.

Efforts to expand the immunization registry statewide have been underway since early 1998. Private providers are recruited through a variety of strategies including working through local public health jurisdictions and immunization coalitions to tailor marketing efforts to the specific community. Special funding from the Department of Health Immunization Program has allowed 19 community and migrant health centers to participate in the registry.

Features have been added over the past two years that enhance the usefulness of the registry to health care providers. These features include:

Aggregate reporting:

HEDIS data (used by health plans to monitor immunization coverage levels)

Practice based:

Recall for patients past due for immunizations (phone lists and mailing lists)

Vaccine usage reports that meet requirements for state-supplied vaccines

Immunization coverage levels (CASA reports)

Vaccine for Children (VFC) bench marking for state-supplies vaccines

Patient specific:

Look up and print out individual immunization histories

Update immunization information

View and print recommendations of immunizations needed

Enter and view exemptions for children who are exempt for medical, personal, or religious reasons or who are immune to a specific disease (such as chickenpox)

Some challenges and barriers affecting registry progress:

Getting the immunization registry populated is a significant barrier. Although most providers support the registry in concept, the practicality of participation is another issue. The primary barriers are lack of necessary equipment in clinic facilities, difficulty of integration into existing clinic systems (dual data entry issues), operational integration into the practice, and the subscription fee that was introduced in 1998. In addition, there is insufficient immunization data currently in the registry to give needed value to most providers. Although there has been a slow but steady increase in data, the registry has immunization information on only 31% of Washington's children between the ages of 0 and 6 years. It should be noted, however, that seven counties are now over the 50% threshold, with two counties at 100%. These are primarily rural counties with fewer providers to enroll. The registry is actively working to significantly enhance the number of records in the system by downloading immunization records from health plans, Medicaid, and other sources of electronic records.

CHILD Profile immunization data has been used by a few counties in conducting immunization coverage surveys, providing information not otherwise available to produce complete immunization records, and/or saving time in contacting individual providers. Although the occasion has not yet arisen, the capability exists to use CHILD Profile to identify children who received specific vaccine doses, for example, in the case of a vaccine recall.

Support and assistance is needed to assure the immunization registry is successfully established statewide. Funders and key CHILD Profile partners are engaged in a strategic planning process to evaluate CHILD Profile in the current environment and develop a plan to address near-term issues and position CHILD Profile for sustainability over the long-term. This work is still in its early stages, but the group has gained agreement that CHILD Profile currently provides more public value than private value. Business plans will need to take this into account. The strategic planning process should be complete in early summer, 2000.

Current political or legislative factors affecting registry activity:**Financial Vulnerability:**

Immunizations are most effective when given on schedule, and immunization registries have been shown to improve immunization rates. However, establishing CHILD Profile as Washington's immunization registry and securing broad-based financial support to sustain the system is a slow process. The system is still financially vulnerable.

Immunization Exemptions and Opting Out of CHILD Profile

State law allows parents to exempt their child from required immunizations for medical, personal, or religious reasons, or if they have a documented immunity to a specific vaccine-preventable disease. Information about a child's exempt status can be recorded by providers in the registry. Additionally, the CHILD Profile health promotion materials alert parents of the importance of immunizations, while noting that the choice for exemption is available. The materials also include a toll-free number (the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies hotline) for parents to call if they have questions about CHILD Profile or do not want to receive the materials. Parents are advised to inform their physician if they wish to opt-out of participating in the immunization registry.

Potential Linkage with Schools:

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and CHILD Profile staff are exploring a possible linkage with schools to increase the efficiency of immunization monitoring at school entry. There may be some statutory implications to this type of linkage.

Additional Information:

The CHILD Profile system can get timely information to parents and providers. When the early brain development research became known, we were able to modify the CHILD Profile health promotion materials to get the information to parents of young children right away. When varicella vaccine became available, we modified the health promotion materials to give parents the information, and modified the immunization recommendations so that providers had the most current information. In this way the system will continue to evolve and change to meet the needs of parents and providers.

Helpful immunization and immunization registry contacts in Washington:

State Department of Health

Name: Janna Halverson
Title: CHILD Profile Manager
Address: Washington State Department of Health
P.O. Box 47880
Olympia, WA 98504-7880
Phone: (360) 236-3554
Fax: (360) 586-7868
Email: janna.halverson@doh.wa.gov

Name: Margaret Hansen
Title: Immunization Program Manager
Address: Washington State Department of Health
P.O. Box 47843
Olympia, WA 98504-7843
Phone: (360) 236-3568
Fax: (360) 236-3590
Email: margaret.hansen@doh.wa.gov

Seattle-King and Snohomish Local Health Jurisdictions Contact:

Name: Robb Seader
Title: Operations Manager
Address: Snohomish Health District
3020 Rucker Avenue, Suite 206
Everett, WA, 98201-3900
Phone: (425) 339-5243
Fax: (425) 339-5265
Email: robb.seader@shd.snohomish.wa.gov

Secretary for Washington State Department of Health:

Name: Mary Selecky
Phone: (360) 236-4016

Washington's Immunization Action Coalition Contact:

Name: Cynthia Shurtleff
Phone: (206) 526-2207

Health Information Institute Contact:

Name: Beverly B. Jacobson
Title: Vice President, Marketing
Address: Healthradius
2700 Richards Road, Suite #100
Bellevue, WA 98005-4200
Phone: (425) 201-5050
Fax: (425) 201-5055
Cell: (425) 985-1560
Email: beverly@healthradius.com
Website: <http://www.healthradius.com>